

Appl. No. 09/864,623
Amdt. Dated August 19, 2003
Reply to Office Action of May 20, 2003

• • R E M A R K S / A R G U M E N T S • •

The Official Action of May 20, 2003 has been thoroughly studied. Accordingly, the changes presented herein for the application, considered together with the following remarks, are believed to be sufficient to place the application into condition for allowance.

By the present amendment, claim 1 has been canceled and independent claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form.

In addition, dependent claims 2 and 4 have been amended to depend from claim 3.

No new matter has been added to the claims.

Entry of the changes to the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4 remain pending in this application.

Claims 1, 2 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,817,087 to Takabayashi et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,458,116 to Matsushita

On page 3 of the Official Action the Examiner objected to claim 3 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and indicated that claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

As noted above, claim 3 has been amended herein to be in independent form.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 3 is presently allowable together with claims 2 and 4 which have been amended to depend from claim 3.

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The prior art rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4 is believed to be moot in view of the allowability of claim 3.

Accordingly, no comments regarding the prior art rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4 are deemed necessary in responding to the Office Action.

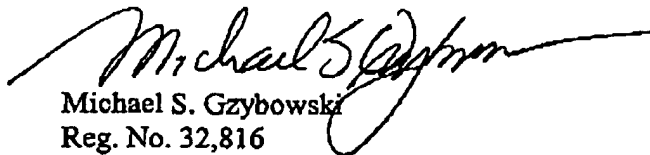
Entry of the present amendment and an early allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

It is believed that the above represents a complete response to the Official Action and reconsideration is requested.

If upon consideration of the above, the Examiner should feel that there remains outstanding issues in the present application that could be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' patent counsel at the telephone number given below to discuss such issues.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 12-2136 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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